

ELECTION DAY: JANUARY 8, 2019

A proposition to allow additional uses of the 2016 Capital Improvements Sales Tax – to incorporate critical Information Technology improvements for the City of Lawton, as well as infrastructure development and improvements aimed at attracting new industry to Lawton – will go to a vote of the people on January 8, 2019.

The proposed amendment of the 2016 Sales Tax Ordinance was unanimously approved to go to a vote of the people by Lawton City Council in August 2018. It entails the use of a portion of funds allocated for alternative water sources to make much needed improvements for additional communal priorities, such as upgrading City’s IT systems and programs, and also creating “shovel-ready” sites for industries wanting to locate in Lawton.

AMENDMENT DETAILS

Alternative Water Resources

Work on Alternative Water Resources will continue. Details of the amendment include deferment of a portion of the last phase of the Alternative Water Sources project unless drought conditions return prior to 2026 (when the City is in a position to begin the next Capital Improvement Plan). This project included three phases: Groundwater Wells, Conveyance Piping, Design and Construction of the Treatment Process. The only proposed deferment is that of the actual construction of the alternative water treatment process.

WHAT WILL BE STILL DONE?

- **Additional Groundwater Investigation**
- **Preliminary Engineering**
- **Groundwater Treatment Pilot**
- **Land Acquisition**
- **Detailed Design**
- **Phase 1 & 2 Construction**
- **Phase 3 Design**

WHAT WILL BE DEFERRED?

- **Phase 3 Construction**

City leaders will continue to move forth with the design, strategic planning and *overall* project layout – much of which has already been completed or approved by Lawton City Council – in the event that the last phase of this project should need to be completed prior to 2026.

Information Technology

The City of Lawton underwent a network crash in 2017, rendering staff and City leaders incapable of accessing email, vital programs and a multitude of information crucial to rendering everyday services. During the recovery process, City management contracted with Landmark Technology Solutions to aid and advise in staff solutions, and to help develop a longterm strategic plan for the City’s Information Technology Division.

Months of critical examination have determined that major upgrades and integration are needed across the City’s information technology systems. Upgrades by way of reallocated funding is needed in the areas of securing and stabilizing communicative services – email, common office platforms, and Information Technology Service Management – as well as significant City-wide projects, to include Public

Safety Facility technology needs, Digital Court System and CAD (EMS – Dispatch) improvements, or Enterprise Resource Planning replacement.

Economic Development

Infrastructure to advance local industrial development is vital to improving our economy. The Lawton Economic Development Corporation has studied the wants and needs of businesses interested in coming to the Lawton community and the greatest need was “shovel-ready sites” – which translates to land that is equipped with utilities and nearby railways ready to be built on and ideal for handling incoming goods. Funds from the amended ordinance would go toward infrastructure and related improvements necessary in these types of advancements.

VOTING

Deadline to register to vote in this election: 12/14/2018

Deadline to apply to receive an absentee ballot by mail: 1/2/2019

Early voting: 1/3/2019 and 1/4/2019 at the Comanche County Courthouse

Deadline for Absentee Voting by Mail: Must be received by Comanche County Election Board Office by mail no later than COB 1/8/2019; must be received by Comanche County Election Board Office in-person no later than COB 1/7/2019.

FAQS

- **How much money would be available for these improvements?**

Approximately \$20 million dollars will be rerouted to go toward information technology upgrades for the City of Lawton and economic development improvements for our community.

- **How much money will be spent in the areas of Information Technology and Economic Development?**

No exact division of available funding has been set for either area (IT or Economic Development) at this time. This is intentional to allow the Lawton City Council the ability to work closely with LEDC to gauge future opportunities as they become available in the area of economic development and to then best appropriate funding to build upon infrastructure needs that accommodate businesses on a case-by-case basis. The Lawton City Council will also continue collaboration with Landmark Technology Solutions, the IT staff and City management to prioritize technology needs and the practicality of implementing new systems or programs in the coming year. Funding will be allotted as survey and analyses continue, which will coincide with City leadership transitions, to include incoming Council members, an Information Technology Director and new City Manager.

- **What happens if we experience another drought?**

First, it should be noted that portions of the first two phases of the Alternative Water Sources project have already begun or are already in process and they will be completed regardless of potential future drought conditions. Phase one and two are expected to be completed in 2022/23. Currently Lake Lawtonka, Lake Waurika, and Lake Ellsworth are at full capacity.

However, if aggregate lake levels drop below 50 percent between 2019 and 2026, Lawton City

Council may complete the Alternative Water Sources project by working with the assistance of the Oklahoma Water Resources Board. This last phase – the construction of the treatment process to utilize alternative water – would take approximately 12-15 additional months to finish.

- **Is water still a priority?**

Yes, water remains a high priority to our City leadership and plans for implementing alternate water sources will continue, as described above. As our community has other urgent needs as well, however, leadership must evaluate and prioritize those needs responsibly in order for the City to operate as efficiently as possible. As in any organization, priorities and needs change and evolve over time. This proposition vote will allow citizens to voice their opinion on the newly emerged needs of the city.

- **What was the initial goal of the Alternative Water Sources Project and what does that mean?**

The initial goal of this project was to provide a more diverse overall raw water supply by adding alternative sources (groundwater or reuse) to supplement the existing surface water supply and to increase our water supply by 10 MGD (million gallons per day). In FY 2011/12, the middle of the drought, the City used an average of approximately 19.5 MGD. However, in the last fiscal year the City averaged only 14.7 MGD. Therefore, we have already accomplished nearly half of our initial goal through conservation efforts, largely by way of education and outreach to the community.

- **Why not wait to make these improvements?**

These are pressing needs for our community. As demonstrated by the network crash of 2017, information technology is vital in all of the inner-workings of the City of Lawton. To provide the most efficient and effective services possible, a greater focus needs to be put on IT upgrades and improvements. Improvements in this area will lead to cost-saving measures – by way of streamlining services and transitioning to fully digital systems, and working to conveniently modernize programs for citizens. Additionally, investing in industrial development brings higher paying jobs to our community and commercial investment to help grow our community. By approving this proposition, citizens will allow for the simultaneous growth of three very important areas of advancement for our community.

- **Does this change the sales tax I pay now?**

This does not change the amount of sales tax you pay and this does not extend the amount of time that you will pay this sales tax. By voting yes to this proposition, you are allowing for a portion of this sales tax to be used for much needed information technology upgrades and economic development improvements for the Lawton community.